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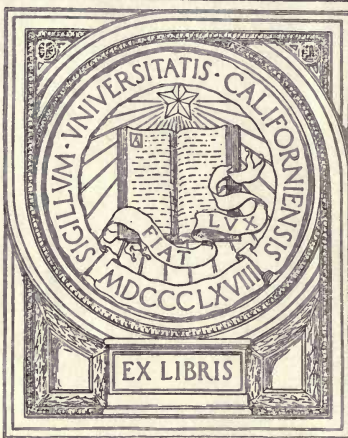
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P O E M,

By R O B E R T B L A I R.

*The House appointed for all Living.*      J O B.

The E I G H T H E D I T I O N.



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L O N D O N.

Printed for G. ROBINSON, Pater-noster Row. 1778.

[Price Six-Pence.]

THE  
VOLUME

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T H E

G R A V E.

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P O E M.

**W**HILST some affect the sun, and some the shade,  
 Some flee the city, some the hermitage,  
 Their arms as various, as the roads they take  
 In journeying thro' life; the task be mine,  
 To paint the gloomy horrors of the *tomb*;  
 The appointed place of rendezvous, where all  
 These travellers meet. Thy succours I implore,  
 Eternal King! whose potent arm sustains  
 The keys of hell and death.—The Grave, dread thing!  
 Men shiver when thou'rt nam'd: Nature appall'd,  
 Shakes off her wonted firmness. Ah! how dark

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Thy long extended realms, and rueful wastes !  
 Wherenought but silence reigns, and night, dark night,  
 Dark as was Chaos, 'ere the infant sun  
 Was roll'd together, or had try'd its beams  
 Athwart the gloom profound ! The sickly taper  
 By glimmering thro' thy low-brow'd misty vaults,  
 (Furr'd round with mouldy damps, and ropy slime,)  
 Lets fall a supernumerary horror ;  
 And only serves to make thy night more irksome ;  
 Well do I know thee by thy trusty yew,  
 Chearless, unsocial plant ! that loves to dwell  
 'Midst skulls and coffins, epitaphs and worms :  
 Where light-heel'd ghosts, and visionary shades,  
 Beneath the wan cold moon (as fame reports)  
 Embod'y'd thick, perform their mystick rounds.  
 No other merriment, dull tree ! is thine.

See yonder hallow'd fane ! the pious work  
 Of names once fam'd, now dubious or forgot,  
 And buried 'midst the wreck of things which were :  
 There lie interr'd the more illustrious dead.  
 The wind is up : hark ! how it howls ! methinks

Till now, I never heard a sound so dreary :  
 Doors creek, and windows clap, and Night's foul bird  
 Rook'd in the spire screams loud : the gloomy aisles  
 Black-plaster'd, and hung round with shreds of scutcheons  
 And tatter'd coats of arms, send back the sound  
 Laden with heavier airs, from the low vaults  
 The mansions of the dead. Rous'd from their slumbers  
 In grim array the grizly spectres rise,  
 Grin horrible, and obstinately fullen  
 Pass and repass, hush'd as the foot of Night.  
 Again ! the screech-owl shrieks : ungracious sound !  
 I'll hear no more, it makes one's blood run chill.

Quite round the pile, a row of reverend elms,  
 Cœval near with that, all ragged shew,  
 Long lash'd by the rude winds : some rift half down  
 Their branchless trunks : others so thin a top,  
 That scarce two crows could lodge in the same tree.  
 Strange things, the neighbours say, have happen'd here  
 Wild shrieks have issued from the hollow tombs,  
 Dead men have come again, and walk'd about,  
 And the great bell has toll'd, unring, untouch'd.

(Such

(Such tales their cheer, at wake or gossiping;  
When it draws near to witching-time of night.)

Oft in the lone church-yard at night I've seen  
By glimpse of moon-shine, chequering thro' the trees,  
The school-boy with his fatchel in his hand,  
Whistling aloud to bear his courage up,  
And lightly tripping o'er the long flat stones  
(With nettles skirted, and with moss o'ergrown,)  
That tell in homely phrase who lie below;  
Sudden! he starts, and hears, or thinks he hears  
The sound of something purring at his heels:  
Full fast he flies, and dares not look behind him,  
Till out of breath he overtakes his fellows:  
Who gather round and wonder at the tale  
Of horrid apparition, tall and ghastly,  
That walks at dead of night, or takes his stand  
O'er some new open'd Grave; and, strange to tell!  
Evanishes at crowing of the cock.

The new-made widow too, I've sometimes spy'd,  
Sad sight! slow moving o'er the prostrate dead:  
Listless, she crawls along in doleful black;

Whilst

Whilst bursts of sorrow gush from either eye,  
 Fast-falling down her now untasted cheek,  
 Prone on the lowly grave of the dear man  
 She drops; whilst busy-meddling Memory,  
 In barbarous succession, musters up  
 The past endearments of their softer hours,  
 Tenacious of its theme. Still, still she thinks  
 She sees him, and indulging the fond thought,  
 Clings yet more closely to the senseless turf,  
 Nor heeds the passenger who looks that way.

Invidious Grave! how do'st thou rend in sunder  
 Whom love has knit, and sympathy made one;  
 A tie more stubborn far than nature's band!  
 Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul,  
 Sweetener of life, and folder of society,  
 I owe thee much. Thou hast deserv'd from me,  
 Far, far beyond what I can ever pay.  
 Oft have I prov'd the labours of thy love,  
 And the warm efforts of the gentle heart  
 Anxious to please. Oh! when my friend and I  
 In some thick wood have wander'd heedless on,

Hid from the vulgar eye ; and sat us down  
 Upon the sloping cowslip-cover'd bank,  
 Where the pure limpid stream has slid along  
 In grateful errors thro' the under-wood  
 Sweet murmuring: methought, the shrill-tongu'd thrush  
 Mended his song of love ; the sooty blackbird  
 Mellow'd his pipe, and soften'd ev'ry note :  
 The eglantine smell'd sweeter, and the rose  
 Assum'd a dye more deep ; whilst ev'ry flower  
 Vy'd with its fellow-plant in luxury  
 Of dress. Oh ! then the longest summer's day  
 Seem'd too, too much in haste : still the full heart  
 Had not imparted half : 'twas happiness  
 Too exquisite to last. Of joys departed  
 Not to return, how painful the remembrance !

Dull Grave: thou spoil'st the dance of youthful blood,  
 Strik'st out the dimple from the cheek of mirth,  
 And ev'ry smirking feature from the face ;  
 Branding our laughter with the name of madness,  
 Where are the jesters now ? the men of health  
 Complexionally pleasant ? where the droll

Whose . . .

Whose ev'ry look and gesture was a joke  
 To clapping theatres and shouting crouds,  
 And made even thick-lip'd musing Melancholy  
 To gather up her face into a smile  
 Before she was aware? Ah! sullen now,  
 And dumb as the green turf that covers them!

Where are the mighty thunderbolts of war?  
 The Roman Cæsars, and the Græcian chiefs,  
 The boast of story? Where the hot-brain'd youth?  
 Who the tiara at his pleasure tore  
 From kings of all the then discover'd globe;  
 And cry'd forsooth, because his arm was hamper'd,  
 And had not room enough to do its work?  
 Alas! how slim, dishonourably slim!  
 And cramm'd into a space we blush to name.  
 Proud royalty! how alter'd in thy looks?  
 How blank thy features, and how wan thy hue?  
 Son of the morning! whither art thou gone?  
 Where hast thou hid thy many-spangled head,  
 And the majestic menace of thine eyes  
 Felt from afar? pliant and powerless now,

Like new-born infant wound up in his swathes;  
 Or victim tumbled flat upon his back  
 That throbs beneath the sacrificer's knife:  
 Mute, must thou bear the strife of little tongues,  
 And coward insults of the base-born crowd;  
 That grudge a privilege thou never hadst,  
 But only hop'd for in the peaceful Grave,  
 Of being unmolested and alone.

Arabia's gums and odoriferous drugs,  
 And honours by the heralds duly paid  
 In mode and form, ev'n to a very scruple;  
 Oh cruel irony! these come too late;  
 And only mock, whom they were meant to honour,  
 Surely! there's not a dungeon-slave, that's bury'd  
 In the highway, unshrouded and uncoffin'd,  
 But lies as soft, and sleeps as sound as he  
 Sorry pre-eminence, of high descent  
 Above the vulgar-born, to sit in state!

But see! the well-plum'd hearse comes nodding on  
 Stately and slow; and properly attended  
 By the whole sable tribe, that painful watch



The sick man's door, and live upon the dead,  
 By letting out their persons by the hour  
 To mimick sorrow, when the heart's not sad.  
 How rich the trappings, now they're all unfurl'd,  
 And glittering in the sun! triumphant entries  
 Of conquerors, and coronation pomps,  
 In glory scarce exceed. Great gluts of people  
 Retard th' unweildy shew; whilst from the casements  
 And houses tops, ranks behind ranks close-wedg'd  
 Hang bellying o'er. But! tell us, why this waste?  
 Why this ado in earthing up a carcase  
 That's fall'n into disgrace, and in the nostril  
 Smells horrible? Ye undertakers! tell us,  
 'Midst all the gorgeous figures you exhibit,  
 Why is the principal concealed, for which  
 You make this mighty stir? 'Tis wisely done:  
 What would offend the eye in a good picture;  
 The painter casts discreetly into shades.

Proud lineage! now how little thou appear'st  
 Below the envy of the private man!  
 Honour! that meddling officious ill,

Pursues thee ev'n to death; nor there stops short;  
 Strange persecution! when the Grave itself  
 Is no protection from rude sufferance.

Abfurd! to think to over-reach the Grave;  
 'And from the wreck of names to rescue ours!  
 The best concerted schemes men lay for fame  
 Die fast away: only themselves die faster.  
 The far-fam'd sculptor, and the laurell'd bard;  
 Those bold insurances of deathless fame,  
 Supply their little feeble aids in vain.  
 The tap'ring pyramid, th' Egyptian's pride,  
 And wonder of the world, whose spiky top  
 Has wounded the thick cloud, and long outliv'd  
 The angry shaking of the winter's storm:  
 Yet spent at last by the injuries of heaven,  
 Shatter'd with age, and furrow'd o'er with years,  
 The mystic cone with hieroglyphics crested  
 Gives way. Oh lamentable sight! at once  
 The labour of whole ages lumbers down;  
 A heideous and mishapen length of ruins,  
 Sepulchral columns wrestle but in vain

With

With all-subduing Time: his cank'ring hand  
 With calm deliberate malice wasteth them:  
 Worn on the edge of days, the brass consumes,  
 The busto moulders, and the deep cut marble,  
 Unsteady to the steel, gives up its charge,  
 Ambition, half convicted of her folly,  
 Hangs down the head, and reddens at the tale.

Here all the mighty troublers of the earth,  
 Who swarm to sov'reign rule thro' seas of blood;  
 Th' oppressive, sturdy, man-destroying villains,  
 Who ravag'd kingdoms, and laid empires waste,  
 And in a cruel wantonness of power  
 Thinn'd states of half their people, and gave up  
 To want the rest: now like a storm that's spent,  
 Lie hush'd, and meanly sneak behind thy covert.  
 Vain thought! to hide them from the general scorn,  
 That haunts and dogs them like an injur'd ghost  
 Implacable. Here too the petty tyrant  
 Of scant domains, geographer ne'er notic'd,  
 And well for neigh'ring grounds, of arm as short:  
 Who fix'd his iron talons on the poor,

And

'And grip'd them like some lordly beast of prey;  
 Deaf to the forceful cries of gnawing hunger,  
 And piteous plaintive voice of Misery :  
 (As if a slave was not a shred of nature,  
 Of the same common nature with his lord :)  
 Now, tame and humble, like a child that's whipp'd  
 Shakes hands with dust, and calls the worm his kinsman,  
 Nor pleads his rank and birthright. Under ground  
 Precedency's a jest; vassal and lord  
 Grossly familiar, side by side consume.

When self esteem, or others adulation,  
 Would cunningly persuade us we are something  
 Above the common level of our kind :  
 The grave gainsays the smooth-complexion'd flatt'ry;  
 And with blunt truth acquaints us what we are.

Beauty ! thou pretty play-thing, dear deceit,  
 That steals so softly o'er the stripling's heart,  
 And gives it a new pulse, unknown before,  
 The Grave discredits thee : Thy charms expung'd,  
 Thy roses faded, and thy lillies soil'd ;

What

What hast thou more to boast of? Will thy lovers  
 Flock round thee now, to gaze and do thee homage?  
 Methinks, I see thee with thy head low laid;  
 Whilst surfeited upon thy damask cheek,  
 The high-fed worm, in lazy volumes roll'd,  
 Riots unscar'd. For this was all thy caution?  
 For this, thy painful labours at thy glass?  
 T'improve those charms, and keep them in repair,  
 For which the spoiler thanks thee not. Foul-feeder!  
 Coarse fare and carrion please thee full as well,  
 And leave as keen a relish on the sense.  
 Look, how the fair one weeps! the conscious tears  
 Stand thick as dew-drops on the bells of flowers:  
 Honest effusion! the swoln heart in vain  
 Works hard to put a gloss on its distress.

Strength too! thou furly, and less gentle boast  
 Of those that laugh loud at the village ring,  
 A fit of common sickness pulls thee down  
 With greater ease, than e'er thou didst the stripling  
 That rashly dar'd thee to the unequal fight.  
 What groan was that I heard? deep groan indeed!

With

With anguish heavy-laden, let me trace it:  
 From yonder bed it comes, where the strong man,  
 By stronger arm belabour'd, gasps for breath  
 Like a hard-hunted beast, How his great heart  
 Beats thick! his roomy chest by far too scant  
 To give the lungs full play! what now avail  
 The strong-built sinewy limbs, and well spread shoulders?  
 See! how he tugs for life, and lays about him,  
 Mad with his pain! eager he catches hold  
 Of what comes next to hand, and grasps it hard,  
 Just like a creature drowning, hideous fight!  
 Oh, how his eyes stand out! and stare full ghastly,  
 Whilst the distemper's rank and deadly venom  
 Shoots like a burning arrow cross his bowels,  
 And drinks his marrow up. Hear you that groan?  
 It was his last. See how the great Goliath,  
 Just like a child that brawl'd itself to rest,  
 Lies still. What mean'st thou then, O mighty boaster,  
 To vaunt of nerves of thine? What means the bull,  
 Unconscious of his strength, to play the coward,  
 And flee before a feeble thing like man;

That knowing well the slackness of his arm,  
Trusts only in the well invented knife?

With study pale, and midnight vigils spent,  
The star-surveying sage, close to his eye  
Applies the sight-invigorating tube,  
And travelling through the boundless length of space,  
Marks well the courses of the far seen orbs,  
That roll with regular confusion there,  
In extasy of thought. But ah! proud man,  
Great heights are hazardous to the weak head:  
Soon, very soon, thy firmest footing fails;  
And down thou dropp'st into that darksome place,  
Where nor device, or knowledge ever came.

Here, the tongue-warrior lies, disabled now,  
Disarm'd, dishonour'd like a wretch that's gagg'd,  
And cannot tell his ail to passers by.  
Great man of language! whence this mighty change?  
This dumb despair, and drooping of the head?  
Tho' strong Persuasion hung upon thy lip,  
And sly Insinuation's softer arts

In ambush lay about thy flowing tongue;  
 Alas how chop-fallen now? thick mists and silence  
 Rest like a weary cloud, upon thy breast  
 Unceasing. Ah! where is the lifted arm,  
 The strength of action and the force of words,  
 The well-turn'd period, and the well-tun'd voice;  
 With all the lesser ornaments of phrase?  
 Ah! fled for ever, as they ne'er had been!  
 Raz'd from the book of fame: or more provoking;  
 Perchance some hackney hunger-bitten scribler  
 Insults thy memory, and blots thy tomb  
 With long flat narrative, or duller rhimes  
 With heavy-halting pace that drawl along;  
 Enough to rouse a dead man into rage,  
 And warm with red resentment the wan cheek;

Here, the great masters of the healing art,  
 These mighty mock-defrauders of the tomb!  
 Spite of their juleps and catholicons  
 Resign to fate. Proud Æsculapius' son,  
 Where are thy boasted implements of art,  
 And all thy well-cramm'd magazines of health?



Nor hill, nor vale, as far as ship could go,  
 Nor margin of the gravel-bottom'd brook,  
 Escap'd thy rifling hand: from stubborn shrubs  
 Thou wrung'st their shy retiring virtues out,  
 And vex'd them in the fire; nor fly, nor insect,  
 Nor writhy snake, escap'd thy deep research.  
 But why this apparatus? why this cost?  
 Tell us, thou doughty keeper from the grave!  
 Where are thy recipes and cordials now,  
 With the long list of vouchers for thy cures?  
 Alas! thou speakest not. The bold impostor  
 Looks not more silly, when the cheat's found out.

Here, the lank-sided miser, worst of felons!  
 Who meanly stole, discreditable shift!  
 From back and belly too, their proper cheer;  
 Eas'd of a tax, it irk'd the wretch to pay  
 To his own carcass, now lies cheaply lodg'd,  
 By clam'rous appetites no longer teaz'd,  
 Nor tedious bills of charges and repairs.  
 But ah! where are his rents, his comings in?  
 Ay! now you have made the rich man poor indeed:

Robb'd of his Gods, what has he left behind?  
 Oh, cursed lust of gold! when for thy sake  
 The fool throws up his int'rest in both worlds;  
 First starv'd in this, than damn'd in that to come,

How shocking must the summons be, O death!  
 To him that is at ease in his possessions;  
 Who counting on long years of pleasure here,  
 Is quite unfurnish'd for that world to come!  
 In that dread moment, how the frantick soul  
 Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,  
 Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,  
 But shrieks in vain! how wishfully she looks  
 On all she's leaving, now no longer hers!  
 A little longer, yet a little longer.  
 Oh, might she stay to wash away her stains,  
 And fit her for her passage! mournful sight!  
 Her very eyes weep blood; and every groan  
 She heaves is big with horror; but the foe,  
 Like a stanch murth'rer steady to his purpose  
 Pursues her close through ev'ry lane of life,  
 Nor misses once the track, but presses on;

Till

Till forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,  
At once she sinks to everlasting ruin.

Sure, 'tis a serious thing to die! my soul!  
What a strange moment must it be, when near  
Thy journey's end, thou hast the gulf in view?  
That awful gulf, no mortal e'er repass'd  
To tell what's doing on the other side!  
Nature runs back, and shudders at the sight,  
And every life-string bleeds at thoughts of parting!  
For part they must: body and soul must part;  
Fond couple! link'd more close than wedded pair.  
This wings its way to its Almighty source,  
The witness of its actions, now its judge;  
That drops into the dark and noisome grave;  
Like a disabled pitcher of no use,

If death was nothing, and nought after death;  
If when men dy'd, at once they ceas'd to be,  
Returning to the barren womb of nothing  
Whence first they sprung; then might the debauchee  
Untrembling mouth the heav'ns: then might the drunkard  
Reel over his full bowl, and when 'tis drain'd,

Fill up another to the brim, and laugh  
 At the poor bug-bear death: then might the wretch  
 That's weary of the world, and tir'd of life,  
 At once give each inquietude the slip  
 By stealing out of being, when he pleas'd,  
 And by what way; whether by hemp or steel:  
 Death's thousand doors stand open. Who could force  
 The ill-pleas'd guest to sit out his full time,  
 Or blame him if he goes? Sure he does well  
 That helps himself as timely as he can,  
 When able. But if there is an hereafter,  
 And that there is, conscience, uninfluenc'd  
 And suffered to speak out, tells ev'ry man:  
 Then must it be an awful thing to die:  
 More horrid yet, to die by one's own hand.  
 Self-murder! name it not: our island's shame:  
 That makes her the reproach of neighbouring states,  
 Shall nature, swerving from her earliest dictate  
 Self-preservation, fall by her own act?  
 Forbid it heaven! let not upon disgust  
 The shameless hand be foully crimson'd o'er

With

With blood of its own lord. Dreadful attempt!  
 Just reeking from self-slaughter, in a rage  
 To rush into the presence of our judge!  
 As if we challeng'd him to do his worst,  
 And matter'd not his wrath. Unheard of tortures  
 Must be reserv'd for such: these herd together;  
 The common damn'd shun their society,  
 And look upon themselves as fiends less foul.

Our time is fix'd, and all our days are number'd;  
 How long, how short, we know not: this we know,  
 Duty requires we calmly wait the summons,  
 Nor dare to stir still heav'n shall give permission:  
 Like centries that must keep their destin'd stand,  
 And wait th' appointed hour, till they are reliev'd.  
 Those only are the brave, who keep their ground,  
 And keep it to the last. To run away  
 Is but a coward's trick: to run away  
 From this world's ills, that at the very worst  
 Will soon blow o'er, thinking to mend ourselves  
 By boldly vent'ring on a world unknown,  
 And plunging headlong in the dark; 'tis mad:  
 No frenzy half so desperate as this.

Tell us ye dead! will none of you in pity  
 To those you left behind disclose the secret?  
 Oh that some courteous ghost would blab it out!  
 What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be.  
 I've heard, that souls departed have sometimes  
 Forewarn'd men of their death: 'twas kindly done  
 To knock and give th' alarm. But what means  
 This stinted charity? 'tis but lame kindness  
 That does its work by halves. Why might you not  
 Tell us what 'tis to die? Do the strict laws  
 Of your society forbid your speaking  
 Upon a point so nice? I'll ask no more:  
 Sullen, like lamps in sepulchres, your shine  
 Enlightens but yourselves: well — 'tis no matter;  
 A very little time will clear up all,  
 And make us learn'd as you are, and as close.

Death's shafts fly thick. Here falls the village swain,  
 And there his pamper'd lord. The cup goes round;  
 And who so artful as to put it by?

'Tis long since death had the majority;

✕ Yet strange! the living lay it not to heart. ✕

See yonder maker of the dead man's bed;  
 The sexton! hoary-headed chronicle,  
 Of hard unmeaning face, down which ne'er stole  
 A gentle tear; with mattock in his hand  
 Digs through whole rows of kindred and acquaintance;  
 By far his juniors! scarce a scull's cast up,  
 But well he know its owner, and can tell  
 Some passage of his life. Thus hand in hand  
 The sot has walk'd with Death twice twenty years;  
 And yet ne'er yonker on the green laughs louder,  
 Or clubs a smuttier tale: when drunkards meet,  
 None sings a merrier catch, or lends a hand  
 More willing to his cup. Poor wretch! he minds not,  
 That soon some trusty brother of the trade  
 Shall do for him what he has done for thousands.

On this side, and on that, men see their friends  
 Drop off, like leaves in autumn; yet launch out  
 Into fantastic schemes, which the long livers  
 In the world's hale and undegen'rate days,  
 Could scarce have leasure for. Fools that we are!  
 Never to think of Death and of Ourselves

At the same time! as if to learn to die  
 Were no concern of ours. Oh more than sottish!  
 For creatures of a day, in gamesome mood  
 To frolick on eternity's dread brink,  
 Unapprehensive; when for ought we know  
 The very first swollen surge shall sweep us in.  
 Think we, or think we not, time hurries on  
 With a resistless unremitting stream,  
 Yet treads more soft than e'er did midnight thief,  
 That slides his hand under the miser's pillow,  
 And carries off his prize. What is this world?  
 What! but a spacious burial-field unwall'd,  
 Strew'd with death's spoils, the spoils of animals  
 Savage and tame, and full of dead men's bones.  
 The very turf on which we tread, once liv'd;  
 And we that live must lend our carcases  
 To cover our own offspring: in their turns  
 They too must cover theirs. 'Tis here all meet:  
 The shiv'ring Icelander, and sun-burnt Moor;  
 Men of climes, that never met before;  
 And of all creeds, the Jew, the Turk, and Christian:  
 Here the proud prince, and favourite yet prouder,



His sov'reign's keeper, and the people's scourge;  
 Are huddled out of sight. Here lie abash'd  
 The great negotiators of the earth,  
 And celebrated masters of the ballance,  
 Deep read in stratagems, and wiles of courts:  
 Now vain their treaty-skill, death scorns to treat.  
 Here the o'erloaded slave flings down his burthen  
 From his gall'd shoulders; and when the cruel tyrant,  
 With all his guards and tools of pow'r about him,  
 Is meditating new unheard-of harships,  
 Mocks his short arm, and quick as thought escapes  
 Where tyrants vex not, and the weary rest.  
 Here the warm lover, leaving the cool shade,  
 The tell-tale echo, and the bubbling stream,  
 (Time out of mind the fav'rite seats of love,)  
 Fast by his gentle mistress lays him down  
 Unblasted by foul tongue. Here friends and foes  
 Lie close; unmindful of their former feuds.  
 The lawn-rob'd prelate, and plain presbyter,  
 E'er while that stood aloof, as shy to meet,  
 Familiar mingle here, like sister-streams  
 That some rude interposing rock had split.

Here is the large-lim'd peasant : here the child  
 Of a span long, that never saw the sun,  
 Nor press'd the nipple, strangled in life's porch :  
 Here is the mother with her sons and daughters ;  
 The barren wife ; and long-demurring maid,  
 Whose lonely unappropriated sweets  
 Smil'd like yon knot of cowslips on the cliff,  
 Not to be come at by the willing hand.  
 Here are the prude severe, and gay coquent,  
 The sober widow, and the young green virgin,  
 Cropp'd like a rose, before 'tis fully blown,  
 Or half its worth disclos'd. Strange medley here !  
 Here garrulous old age winds up his tale ;  
 And jovial youth of lightsome vacant heart,  
 Whose ev'ry day was made of melody,  
 Hears not the voice of mirth : the shrill-tongu'd shrew,  
 Meek as the turtle dove, forgets her chiding.  
 Here are the wise, the generous and the brave ;  
 The just, the good, the worthless, the prophane,  
 The downright clown, and perfectly well-bred ;  
 The fool, the churl, the scoundrel, and the mean,  
 The supple statesman and the patriot stern ;

The wrecks of nations, and the spoils of time,  
 With all the lumber of six thousand years.

Poor man ! how happy once in thy first state !  
 When yet but warm from thy great Maker's hand,  
 He stamp'd thee with his image, and well pleas'd  
 Smil'd on his last fair work. Then all was well.  
 Sound was the body, and the soul serene ;  
 Like two sweet instruments ne'er out of tune,  
 That play their several parts. Nor head, nor heart,  
 Offer'd to ache : nor was there cause they should ;  
 For all was pure within : no fell remorse,  
 Nor anxious castings up of what might be,  
 Alarm'd his peaceful bosom : summer seas  
 Shew not more smooth, when kiss'd by southern winds,  
 Just ready to expire. Scarce importun'd,  
 The generous soil with a luxuriant hand  
 Offer'd the various produce of the year,  
 And every thing most perfect in its kind.  
 Blessed ! thrice blessed days ! but ah, how short !  
 Bless'd as the pleasing dreams of holy men ;  
 But fugitive like those, and quickly gone.

Oh,

Oh, flipp'ry state of things! what sudden turns?  
 What strange vicissitudes, in the first leaf  
 Of man's sad history? to-day most happy,  
 And 'ere to-morrow's sun has set, most abject!  
 How scant the space between these vast extremes!  
 Thus far'd it with our Sire: Not long he enjoy'd  
 His paradise! scarce had the happy tenant  
 Of the fair spot due time to prove its sweets,  
 Or sum them up; when strait he must be gone  
 Ne'er to return again. And must he go?  
 Can nought compound for the first dire offence  
 Of erring man? Like one that is condemn'd,  
 Fain would he trifle time with idle talk,  
 And parley with his fate. But 'tis in vain,  
 Not all the lavish odours of the place  
 Offer'd in incense can procure his pardon,  
 Or mitigate his doom. A mighty angel  
 With flaming sword forbids his longer stay,  
 And drives the loiterer forth; nor must he take  
 One last and farewell round. At once he lost  
 His glory, and his God. If mortal now,  
 And sorely main'd, no wonder! Man has sinn'd.

Sick of his bliss, and bent on new adventures,  
 Evil he wou'd needs try: nor try'd in vain.  
 (Dreadful experiment! destructive measure!  
 Where the worst thing could happen, was success)  
 Alas! too well he sped: the good he scorn'd  
 Stalk'd off reluctant, like an ill-us'd ghost,  
 Not to return; or if it did, its visits  
 Like those of angels short, and far between:  
 Whilst the black dæmon with his hell-scap'd train,  
 Admitted once into its better room,  
 Grew loud and mutinous, nor would be gone;  
 Lording it o'er the man, who now too late  
 Saw the rash error, which he could not mend:  
 An error fatal not to him alone,  
 But to his future sons, his fortune's heirs.  
 Inglorious bondage! human nature groans  
 Beneath a vassalage so vile and cruel,  
 And its vast body bleeds at ev'ry pore.

What havock hast thou made? foul monster, sin!  
 Greatest and first of ills! the fruitful parent  
 Of woes of all dimensions! but for thee

Sorrow had never been. All noxious things,  
 Of vilest nature! Other sorts of evils  
 Are kindly circumscrib'd, and have their bounds.  
 The fierce volcano, from its burning entrails  
 That belches molten stone and globes of fire,  
 Involv'd in pitchy clouds of smoke and stench,  
 Marrs the adjacent fields for some leagues round,  
 And there it stops. The big-swoln inundation,  
 Of mischief more diffusive; raving loud,  
 Buries whole tracts of country, threat'ning more;  
 But that, too has its shore it cannot pass.  
 More dreadful far than these! sin has laid waste  
 Not here and there a country, but a world:  
 Dispatching at a wide extended blow  
 Entire mankind; and for their sakes defacing  
 A whole creation's beauty with rude hands;  
 Blasting the foodful grain, the loaded branches,  
 And marking all along its way with ruin.  
 Accur'd thing! oh, where shall fancy find  
 A proper name to call thee by, expressive  
 Of all thy horrors? pregnant womb of ills!  
 Of temper so transcendently malign,

That

That toads and serpents of most deadly kind  
 Compar'd to thee are harmless. Sicknēsses  
 of ev'ry size and symptom, racking pains,  
 And bluest plagues are thine ! See how the fiend  
 Profusely scatters the contagion round !  
 Whilst deep-mouth'd slaughter bellowing at her heels  
 Wades deep in blood new spilt ; yet for to-morrow  
 Shapes out new work of great uncommon daring,  
 And inly pines till the dread blow is struck.

But hold ! I've gone too far ; too much discover'd  
 My father's nakedness, and nature's shame.  
 Here let me pause ! and drop an honest tear,  
 One burst of filial duty, and condolance,  
 O'er all those ample deserts death hath spread,  
 This chaos of mankind. O great man-eater !  
 Whose ev'ry day is carnival, not fated yet !  
 Unheard-of epicure ! without a fellow !  
 The veriest gluttons do not always cram ;  
 Some intervals of abstinence are sought  
 To edge the appetite : thou seekest none.  
 Methinks the countless swarms thou hast devour'd

And thousands that each hour thou gobblest up ;  
 This, less than this, might gorge thee to the full !  
 But ah ! rapacious still, thou gap'st for more :  
 Like one, whole days defrauded of his meals,  
 On whom lank hunger lays his skinny hand,  
 And whets to keenest eagerness his cravings,  
 (As if diseases, massacres, and poison,  
 Famine, and war, were not thy caterers ! )

But know that thou must render up thy dead,  
 And with high int'rest too ! they are not thine ;  
 But only in thy keeping for a season,  
 Till the great promis'd day of restitution ;  
 When loud diffusive sound from brazen trump  
 Of strong-lung'd cherub shall alarm thy captives,  
 And rouse the long, long sleepers into life,  
 Day-light, and liberty. —————

Then must thy gates fly open, and reveal  
 The mines, that lay long forming under ground,  
 In their dark cells immur'd : but now full ripe,  
 And pure as silver from the crucible,  
 That twice has stood the torture of the fire

And



And inquisition of the forge. We know,  
 Th' illustrious deliverer of mankind,  
**THE SON OF GOD**, thee foil'd. Him in thy pow'r  
 Thou couldst not hold: self-vigorous he rose,  
 And shaking off thy fetters, soon retook  
 Those spoils his voluntary yielding lent.  
 (Sure pledge of our releasement from thy thrall;)

Twice twenty days he sojourn'd here on earth,  
 And shew'd himself alive to chosen witnesses  
 By proofs so strong that the most slow assenting  
 Had not a scruple left. This having done,  
 He mounted up to Heav'n. Methinks! I see him  
 Climb the aerial heights, and glide along  
 Athwart the severing clouds: but the faint eye  
 Flung backwards in the chace, soon drops its hold;  
 Disabled quite, and jaded with pursuing.

Heaven's portals wide expand to let him in;  
 Nor are his friends shut out: as some great prince  
 Not for himself alone procures admission,  
 But for his train: it was his royal will,  
 That where he is, there should his followers be.  
 Death only lies between; a gloomy path!

Made yet more gloomy by our coward fears !  
 But not untrod, nor tedious : the fatigue  
 Will soon go off. Besides, there's no by-road  
 To bliss. Then why, like ill-condition'd children,  
 Start we at transient hardships, in the way  
 That leads to purer air, and softer skies,  
 And a ne'er-setting sun ? Fools that we are !  
 We wish to be where sweets unwith'ring bloom ;  
 But strait our wish revoke, and will not go.  
 So have I seen upon a summer's even,  
 Fast by the riv'let's brink, a youngster play :  
 How wishfully he looks to stem the tide,  
 This moment resolute, next unresolv'd :  
 At last, he dips his foot ; but as he dips,  
 His fears redouble, and he runs away  
 From th' inoffensive stream, unmindful now  
 Of all the flow'rs that paint the further bank,  
 And smil'd so sweet of late. Thrice welcome death !  
 That after many a painful bleeding step  
 Conducts us to our home, and lands us safe  
 On the long-wish'd for shore. Prodigious change !  
 Our bane turn'd to a blessing ! death disarm'd

Loses his fellness quite. All thanks to him  
 Who scourg'd the venom out. Sure! the last end  
 Of the good man is peace. How calm his exit!  
 Night dews fall not more gently to the ground,  
 Nor weary worn-out winds expire so soft,  
 Behold him! in the evening-tide of life,  
 A life well-spent, whose early care it was  
 His riper years should not upbraid his green :  
 By unperceiv'd degrees he wears away ;  
 Yet like the sun seems larger at his setting!  
 High in his faith and hopes, look! how he reaches  
 After the prize in view! and like a bird  
 That's hamper'd, struggles hard to get away!  
 Whilst the glad gates of sight are wide expanded  
 To let new glories in, the first fair fruits  
 Of the fast-coming harvest. Then! oh then!  
 Each earth-born joy grows vile, or disappears,  
 Shrunk to a thing of nought. Oh! how he longs  
 To have his passport sign'd, and be dismiss'd!  
 'Tis done ; and now he's happy : the glad soul  
 Has not a wish uncrown'd. Ev'n the lag flesh  
 Rests too in hope of meeting once again

Its better half, never to funder more.  
 Nor shall it hope in vain: the time draws on  
 When not a single spot of burial-earth,  
 Whether on land, or in the spacious sea,  
 But must give back its long committed dust  
 Inviolate: and faithfully shall these  
 Make up the full account; not the least atom  
 Embezzl'd, or mislaid, of the whole tale.  
 Each soul shall have a body ready furnish'd;  
 And each shall have his own. Hence ye prophane!  
 Ask not, how this can be? Sure the same pow'r  
 That rear'd the piece at first, and took it down,  
 Can re-assemble the loose scatter'd parts,  
 And put them as they were. Almighty God  
 Has done much more; nor is his arm impair'd  
 Thro' length of days; and what he can, he will:  
 His faithfulness stands bound to see it done.  
 When the dread trumpet sounds, the slumb'ring dust,  
 Not unattentive to the call, shall wake:  
 And ev'ry joint possess its proper place,  
 With a new elegance of form, unknown  
 To its first state. Nor shall the conscious soul

Mistake its partner; but amidst the croud  
 Singling its other half, into its arms  
 Shall rush, with all th' impatience of a man  
 That's new-come home, who having long been absent  
 With haste runs over ev'ry different room,  
 In pain to see the whole. Thrice happy meeting!  
 Nor time, nor death, shall ever part them more.

'Tis but a night, a long and moonless night,  
 We make the grave our bed, and then are gone.

Thus at the shut of ev'n, the weary bird  
 Leaves the wide air, and in some lonely brake  
 Cows down, and dozes till the dawn of day,  
 Then claps his well-fledg'd wings and bears away.

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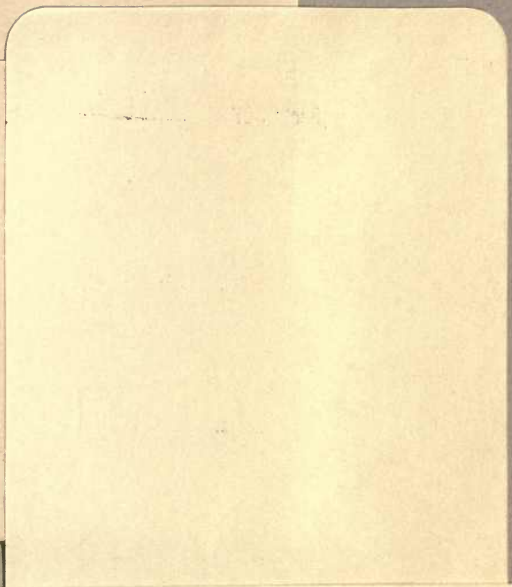
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